

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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 FROM American Embassy, Rome
 TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON
 REF Athens Despatch 1500, June 26, 1953

CONFIDENTIAL
 (Security Classification)

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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 JUL 20 1953
 BUREAU OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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SUBJECT: PERIPHERAL: NEW ALBANIAN REFUGEE FRONT

Prof. Ernesto KOLIGI, an Albanian refugee who has been a professor of Albanian literature and language at the University of Rome since 1937, called at the Embassy recently to plead the cause of the two Albanian refugee organizations which remain outside the National Committee for a Free Albania.

He reported that on July 3 these two groups--Balli Kombetar and Blocco Indipendente--had joined to form the Unione Democratica Albanese. (Apparently this is the new Albanian front mentioned in Athens' despatch 1500, of June 26, 1953). He said that the leaders of the new group are ALI KLISSURA representing Balli Kombetar, and Dr. ISMAIL VERLACI and NDUE GJOMARKAJ (the leading Albanian Catholic), representing the Blocco Indipendente. Professor Koligi indicated that the leaders of the new group will call at the Embassy in the near future to outline and explain the platform of their new organization.

Koligi said that at the present time there are five Albanian refugee organizations; three are affiliated with the National Committee for a Free Albania and the remaining two form the Unione. Of the three which are with the National Committee, he said that only the Zog Legitimist Party has any considerable influence among the Albanians; the other two--the Peasant Party and the Balli Agrario--are new organizations formed since the communist regime in Albania was installed and have little support in Albania itself. The Balli Kombetar, he said, is particularly strong in the south of Albania and the Blocco is strong in the north and central parts.

It was obvious from his remarks that he felt there should be American support for all five groups rather than for simply those three which are affiliated with the National Committee. In this connection he pointed out that his two groups had always been anti-Slav and pro-Western in their political orientation; since Italy was the closest western society, it was natural that the two groups should form close links with the Italians, even under Fascism. (Obviously, Koligi was attempting to rationalize the criticism which has been directed against Balli Kombetar and the Blocco on the basis of their Fascist connections during the war and, according to the National Committee parties, their continual adherence to Fascist philosophy.)

He said that although it was the announced aim of the National Committee to unify all Albanian refugee groups, recently JOHN LEE, whom he identified as the

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American assistant to the National Committee, visited Italy and made no effort to contact representatives of the two non-committee organizations. This he felt was a mistake and he again pointed out that his two groups had always been oriented toward America as the leading defender of Western civilization; parenthetically he stated that the three groups which form the National Committee have been historically more closely tied to British interests than American.

For the Ambassador

Edward L. Froers
Edward L. Froers

First Secretary of Embassy

cc: American Embassy, Athens

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